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# Assembly California Legislature

JOHN LAIRD

ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWENTY SEVENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
Chair, BUDGET  
JUDICIARY  
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT  
NATURAL RESOURCES

September 6, 2007

Dear Friend,

I am writing to request your review of the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) multi-stage process to disrupt Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) mating in the Monterey Peninsula area by aerial application of two pheromones: CheckMate OLR-F and CheckMate LBAM-F.

According to the CDFA, because the LBAM feeds on hundreds of different kinds of plants, it presents a threat to trees and plants in the natural environment as well as to crops and landscaping. Cypress and redwood trees, Monterey pine, oaks, lupines and many other native species are included on the extensive "host list" for this pest.

Significant portions of my district have been designated eradication areas, which include portions of Monterey, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties. CDFA's plans include multiple phases of aerial spraying in Monterey County, as well as an as-yet-unspecified plan to spray in Santa Cruz County (where the infestation is much worse). Constituents from throughout my district have contacted me to express their deep concerns about CDFA's plans.

CDFA Secretary Kawamura has said, "pheromones are among the most environmentally friendly treatments ever used to eradicate a pest infestation in California." Additionally, California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) has announced its support of CDFA's aerial spraying plan based in part on the USDA National Organic Program's approval of the use of the Checkmate pheromone in organic agriculture.

On the other hand, I am hearing numerous concerns from residents. For instance, some are suspicious of assurances that CheckMate OLR-F and Checkmate LBAM-F are safe, based on animal studies of other pheromones. The pheromone will be delivered in what has been described as an organic polymer that will biodegrade in about a month. Reportedly, the inert ingredient(s) have never been tested or used in an aerial application over an urban area. Residents are extremely concerned about the short- and long-term human health and environmental impacts of what is perceived to be large quantities of pheromone, plus an unknown and potentially toxic substance being aerially sprayed on multiple occasions over a highly populated area.

Additional concerns as outlined in recent news on this controversy may be found on my Website at: <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a27/>

The LBAM situation is urgent, complicated and involves public health, the environment and the local economy. I have said publicly that before pursuing any plan to spray, we need to have a comprehensive public process that emphasizes sound science. Unfortunately, before that comprehensive public process could take place, Secretary Kawamura directed initial spraying to take place in Monterey County on September 9, 10 and 11, with additional applications to follow.

In my opinion, third-party review based on sound science is a critical element in the public review process. Even though spraying is scheduled to move forward, I still believe that a third-party review process is needed. **Therefore, I would appreciate your assistance by providing me your expert opinion on whether aerial application of CheckMate OLR-F and CheckMate LBAM-F presents a threat to human health and/or the environment, as well as a statement of support or opposition for the plan.** I would appreciate your response in writing as soon as possible.

For more information about CDFA's plans, please go to:  
[www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/PDEP/lbam/lbam\\_main.html](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/PDEP/lbam/lbam_main.html)

If you need further information, please don't hesitate to contact Colleen Freeman, at 831-649-2832 or [colleen.freeman@asm.ca.gov](mailto:colleen.freeman@asm.ca.gov).

Thank you in advance for any assistance you can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Laird". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**JOHN LAIRD**, Assemblymember  
27th District